

# Cleansing of the Temple

April 29, 2007

John 2:13-25 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business." His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house will consume Me." The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.

## I. Background

- A. Jesus deliberately made a scourge
- B. Jesus fulfills the Scriptures:  
Zeal for Your house will consume Me (Psa 69:9).
- C. Jesus cleansed the temple a second time at the end of his ministry  
(Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-46)
- D. Religious leaders want a sign (verification) of His authority  
What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?"
- E. The sign of His authority is His death and resurrection  
"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (Mat 12:38)
- F. Our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit

1 Cor 3:16-17 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

1 Cor 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you,

2 Cor 6:16 - 7:1 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate;" says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me," says the Lord Almighty. Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

## II. Repentance

- A. What does it mean for a person to "repent"?
  - 1. The word "repent" means to change one's mind, thought, purpose or views regarding a matter. It refers to a change in heart (attitude), which results in a new direction for the whole life.
  - 2. The Greek word is metanoia; It means to change your mind to turn from or have an afterthought. It is a change of mind that is reflected in a change of conduct

3. Charles Finney defined repentance as an "intellectual and a hearty giving up of all controversy with God upon all and every point. It implies a conviction that God is wholly right, and the sinner is wholly wrong, and a thorough and hearty abandonment of all excuses and apologies for sin."

B. We are to repent from dead works.

Heb 6:1 So let us stop going over the basics of Christianity again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start all over again with the importance of turning away from evil deeds and placing our faith in God.

1. Religious works, establishing our own self righteousness.  
Rom 10:1-4 Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is that the Jewish people might be saved. I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Instead, they are clinging to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. They won't go along with God's way. For Christ has accomplished the whole purpose of the law. All who believe in him are made right with God.
2. Religious performance yet living in sin.  
Isa 1:10-15 Listen to the Lord, you leaders of Israel! Listen to the law of our God, people of Israel. You act just like the rulers and people of Sodom and Gomorrah. I am sick of your sacrifices," says the Lord. "Don't bring me any more burnt offerings! I don't want the fat from your rams or other animals. I don't want to see the blood from your offerings of bulls and rams and goats. Why do you keep parading through my courts with your worthless sacrifices? The incense you bring me is a stench in my nostrils! Your celebrations of the new moon and the Sabbath day, and your special days for fasting--even your most pious meetings--are all sinful and false. I want nothing more to do with them. I hate all your festivals and sacrifices. I cannot stand the sight of them! From now on, when you lift up your hands in prayer, I will refuse to look. Even though you offer many prayers, I will not listen. For your hands are covered with the blood of your innocent victims.
3. Seeking to be justified by the law (rules).  
Gal 5:4 For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace.
4. Having confidence in what I did yesterday.  
Phil 3:7-11 I once thought all these things were so very important, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own goodness or my ability to obey God's law, but I trust Christ to save me. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. As a result, I can really know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I can learn what it means to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that, somehow, I can experience the resurrection from the dead!

C. We are to repent from sin and towards God

From sin

(Ac.2:38-40; 3:19; 8:22; Lk.24:46-47)

and towards God

(Ac.20:21; 26:19-20).

### III. Why is repentance necessary for man?

- A. Because of the fall of Adam, the first man, into sin there is an inborn desire in the mind of man to go his own way and rebel against the right ways of God.

Eph 2:3 All of us used to live that way, following the passions and desires of our evil nature. We were born with an evil nature, and we were under God's anger just like everyone else.

Col 1:21 This includes you who were once so far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions,

Prov 14:12 There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.

Isa 53:6 All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the guilt and sins of us all.

B. Because every individual has erred from the right ways of God by virtue of his own decisions in life.

Rom 7:18-25 I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't. When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it. It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another law at work within me that is at war with my mind. This law wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard.

C. Because in himself man does not have the power to live a life that is pleasing to God.

Heb 11:6 So, you see, it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

#### IV. What are some of the wrong concept about repentance?

There are many concepts that have been confused with true repentance. The tragedy is that if we accept any one of these false concepts it will keep us from experiencing genuine repentance.

##### True repentance is not:

A. Conviction of sin.

Conviction of sin will always precede genuine repentance, but not all who are convicted will truly repent

Act 24:24-25 A few days later Felix came with his wife, Drusilla, who was Jewish. Sending for Paul, they listened as he told them about faith in Christ Jesus. As he reasoned with them about righteousness and self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified. "Go away for now," he replied. "When it is more convenient, I'll call for you again."

B. Worldly sorrow;

Worldly sorrow is simply being sorry for "getting caught", but not being sorry for the actual crime committed. Given the same set of circumstances this person would probably repeat the same sin

2 Cor 7:10 For God can use sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin and seek salvation. We will never regret that kind of sorrow. But sorrow without repentance is the kind that results in death.

C. Mere reformation.

Reformation in this sense is simply trying to "turn over a new leaf" in the strength of the natural man. This will never be successful without a genuine heart change.

D. Being religious.

The Pharisees in Christ's day were very religious but they were hypocrites. It is possible to maintain a form of religion but never experience the genuine power of repentance

2 Tim 3:5 They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. You must stay away from people like that.

E. Mental faith or "only believism;"

Mental faith is merely the mental acceptance and assent to a set of creeds or doctrines, but without any real change of heart and life

James 2:19 Do you still think it's enough just to believe that there is one God? Well, even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror! 20 Fool! When will you ever learn that faith that does not result in good deeds is useless?

Oswald Chambers writes that repentance "describes that deep and radical change whereby a sinner turns from the idols of self and sin to God, and devotes every movement of the inner and outer man to the captivity of His obedience."

F. Trying harder. Repentance comes from God.

The kindness of God leads you to repentance.

Rom 2:4 Don't you realize how kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Or don't you care? Can't you see how kind he has been in giving you time to turn from your sin?

God grants repentance.

Acts 5:29-31 But Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than human authority. The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead after you killed him by crucifying him. Then God put him in the place of honor at his right hand as Prince and Savior. He did this to give the people of Israel an opportunity to turn from their sins and turn to God so their sins would be forgiven.

Acts 11:18 When the others heard this, all their objections were answered and they began praising God. They said, "God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of turning from sin and receiving eternal life."

2 Tim 2:24-26 The Lord's servants must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone. They must be able to teach effectively and be patient with difficult people. They should gently teach those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will believe the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the Devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.

#### **V. What are the fruits of genuine repentance?**

If genuine repentance has taken place on the inside of man there will be outward signs, or fruits, of this inward work. Although no one can judge the heart of another, there should be external evidence that the heart has been truly changed. John the Baptist did not merely accept the Pharisee's confession that they desired a baptism unto repentance, he challenged them to also;

Matt 3:8 "Prove by the way you live that you have really turned from your sins and turned to God."

#### **If genuine repentance has taken place, it should be evidenced by the following:**

A. A godly sorrow for sin.

2 Cor 7:9-11 Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to have remorse and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. For God can use sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin and seek salvation. We will never regret that kind of sorrow. But sorrow without repentance is the kind that results in death. Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish the wrongdoer. You showed that you have done everything you could to make things right.

B. A confession of sin and a plea for mercy.

1 Jn 1:9 But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.

Lu 15:21 His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.'

Lu 18:13-14 "But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner. I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For the proud will be humbled, but the humble will be honored.'"

C. A turning from, or forsaking, of sinful ways

Pro 28:13 People who cover over their sins will not prosper. But if they confess and forsake them, they will receive mercy.

Act 19:17-20 The story of what happened spread quickly all through Ephesus, to Jews and Greeks alike. A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honored. Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices. A number of them who had been practicing magic brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars. So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect.

D. A godly hatred for sin.

Ezk 36:31-33 Then you will remember your past sins and hate yourselves for all the evil things you did. But remember, says the Sovereign LORD, I am not doing this because you deserve it. O my people of Israel, you should be utterly ashamed of all you have done! "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When I cleanse you from your sins, I will bring people to live in your cities, and the ruins will be rebuilt.

E. A turning unto the ways of righteousness.

1 Thes 1:9 for they themselves keep talking about the wonderful welcome you gave us and how you turned away from idols to serve the true and living God.

Col 3:1-14 Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits at God's right hand in the place of honor and power. Let heaven fill your thoughts. Do not think only about things down here on earth. For you died when Christ died, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your real life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires. Don't be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry. God's terrible anger will come upon those who do such things. You used to do them when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds. In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you. In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony.

F. A restitution for the wrongs done, wherever possible.

Lev 6:1-7 And the LORD said to Moses, "Suppose some of the people sin against the Lord by falsely telling their neighbor that an item entrusted to their safekeeping has been lost or stolen. Or suppose they have been dishonest with regard to a security deposit, or they have taken something by theft or extortion. Or suppose they find a lost item and lie about it, or they deny something while under oath, or they commit any other similar sin. If they have sinned in any of these ways and are guilty, they must give back whatever they have taken by theft or extortion, whether a security deposit, or property entrusted to them, or a lost object that they claimed as their own, or anything gained by swearing falsely. When they realize their guilt, they must

restore the principal amount plus a penalty of 20 percent to the person they have harmed. They must then bring a guilt offering to the priest, who will present it before the LORD. This offering must be a ram with no physical defects or the animal's equivalent value in silver. The priest will then make atonement for them before the LORD, and they will be forgiven."

Lu 19:8 Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have overcharged people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"

Without these fruits being manifest, there is no genuine Bible repentance.

## **VI. What are the results of genuine repentance?**

A. There is great joy in Heaven.

Lu 15:7 In the same way, heaven will be happier over one lost sinner who returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!

Lu 15:10 In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents."

B. There is a pardon and remission of sins.

Isa 55: 7 Let the people turn from their wicked deeds. Let them banish from their minds the very thought of doing wrong! Let them turn to the LORD that he may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

C. There is great refreshing from the Lord.

Act 3:19-21 Now turn from your sins and turn to God, so you can be cleansed of your sins. Then wonderful times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will send Jesus your Messiah to you again. For he must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his prophets.

D. There is a clearing of the conscience.

2 Cor 7:10-11 For God can use sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin and seek salvation. We will never regret that kind of sorrow. But sorrow without repentance is the kind that results in death. Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish the wrongdoer. You showed that you have done everything you could to make things right.

## **Conclusion:**

Repentance is something that is absolutely necessary if we are to be founded on the Rock, Christ Jesus. It begins as a one-time experience when we accept the Lordship of Christ in our life, but it continues to be important in the process of sanctification as the Holy Spirit is faithful to point out many other areas that are in need of change. Every believer needs to be prepared to respond in repentance as often as there is a need for it. In this way we will progress daily in our Christian walk toward God's ultimate will for our lives.